

Traveling with Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts love to travel! From field trips to global adventures, girls can experience all that our country has to offer - whether they're "blasting off" at Space Camp in Alabama, taking in a Broadway show in New York City, or visiting the birthplace of Girl Scouts' founder, Juliette Gordon Low, in Savannah, Georgia.

Girl Scout travel experiences are built upon a progression of activities and the girl-led process. Girls at each grade level can be involved in planning their trip and will learn from the experiences they share in traveling. Troops are encouraged to follow the troop travel progression process together:

Tier 1	Tier 1 trips are short trips around your local area that may take place during regular troop meeting times. Examples include: a walk to a local park, a visit to the fire department, or a short ride to a grocery store.
Tier 2	Tier 2 trips are all-day trips to nearby points of interest such as a wildlife center or council day program. To keep it girl-led, girls should select the location and do trip planning (cost, what to bring, what they want to learn about). Through Tier 2 day trips, girls can experience travel without being too far from home or staying overnight.
Tier 3	<p>Tier 3 trips are short overnight trips that include one or two nights and are less than 4 hours away. These trips may be to a nearby city, museum overnight, or camporee, and are an opportunity for girls to learn how to plan longer trips without being so far away that they get homesick.</p> <p>Please Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A "Parent/guardian and Me Trip" can be part of Tier 3 progression with the goal of girls becoming comfortable traveling with their troop as an independent group. • Daisies can participate in overnights if they have had trip progression and are comfortable traveling with their troop.
Tier 4 Juniors and older girls	<p>Tier 4 trips are longer overnight trips that include three or more nights and/or are over 4 hours away. Tier 4 travel is planned by the girls with leaders' guidance. Girls plan their lodging, transportation, itinerary, and a budget based on financial goals they have set as part of product sales and additional money earners. These trips are unique to the Girl Scout experience and not typically something girls could otherwise do with their family. Submit extended trip paperwork 4-6 months prior to the trip.</p> <p>Please Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the number of adult leaders/chaperones needed to follow girl/adult ratios or are required to meet transportation needs (i.e. relief drivers) should be traveling with the troop.
Tier 5 Cadettes and older girls	<p>Tier 5 trips are international trips that allow girls to travel around the world. International travel often requires two years of preparation to allow girls sufficient time to organize the required paperwork and health requirements to travel to the country they choose. Parental support is vital to enabling the girls to make their trip happen as a troop experience. Submit extended trip paperwork at least one year prior to international travel.</p>

Travel Paperwork and Adult Requirements

This table gives leaders an overview of the travel requirements associated with each tier. For all activities, be sure to follow girl/adult ratios and check Safety Activity Checkpoints. If you have questions, please contact customercare@girlscoutsgwm.org or call 1-888-474-9686.

Tier Levels	Forms Needed	Insurance Required	Adult Requirements	Training Required
Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troop Activity and Quick Trip Checklist • Annual Permission Slip 	Plan 2 insurance (If non-Girl Scout members are participating.)	Adults counted in girl/adult ratios must have completed the Volunteer Process.	CPR/First aid is not required provided adults present have a working phone and can call emergency services if needed.
Tier 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troop Activity and Quick Trip Checklist • Annual Permission Slip 	Plan 2 insurance (If non-Girl Scout members are participating.)	Adults counted in girl/adult ratios must have completed the Volunteer Process.	CPR/First aid
Tier 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troop Activity and Quick Trip Checklist • Annual or Single Event Permission Slip 	Plan 2 insurance (If non-Girl Scout members are participating.)	Adults attending must have completed the Volunteer Process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPR/First aid • Outdoor skills if applicable
Tier 4 Domestic Extended Trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Trip Checklist • Intent to Travel Form (must be submitted 4-6 months prior to travel*) • Single Event Permission Slip • Annual Health Form 	Plan 3E insurance (Form will be given on final trip approval.)	Adults attending must have completed the Volunteer Process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPR/First aid • Outdoor skills if applicable
Tier 5 International Extended Trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Trip Checklist • Intent to Travel Form (must be submitted 1 year prior to travel*) • Single Event Permission Slip • Notarized Health Form • Notarized permission to travel 	Plan 3PI insurance (Form will be given on final trip approval.)	Adults attending must have completed the Volunteer Process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPR/First aid • Outdoor skills if applicable

* Provisional approval (or denial) will be sent after your Preliminary Permission for Extended Trip form has been received and reviewed by GSGWM staff. Many things affect whether or not a trip is approved by Girl Scouts. As the trip date gets closer and the girls have more details, plans are confirmed, and updated information is sent to the GSGWM or Customer Care, final approval can be given. A Final Approval letter will be sent to the troop along with an application form with instructions for additional travel insurance and a Troop Trip Report form.

Troop Travel Basics

Money Earning

Earnings from the Fall Product and Cookie Product programs can fund the majority of the trips girls want to do. Girls can also participate in additional money-earning activities to cover travel expenses for Tier 3 trips and beyond, provided that these activities do not take place during the Fall Product and Cookie sale dates. Any additional money-earning activity outside of product sales requires troops to submit a Troop/Group Money-Earning Request Form (found in the [Troop Packet](#) and on our website at girlscoutsgwm.org) to their Community Accounting Coordinator (CAC) and/or GSGWM for approval *at least 4 weeks prior to the activity*. Please remember, all money-earning activities require girls to provide a good or service to earn funds. Please refer to page 4 of the Troop/Group Money Earning Request form for further details.

Budgeting

Since all troop funds belong to all girls in the troop, girls should work together as a group to decide how best to spend the troop funds. When budgeting for their trip, girls should set financial goals based on what they want to do, and may need to adjust their goals or plan more money-earning activities if there are not enough funds available. If a troop is doing a Tier 4 or 5 trip and not all girls will be participating, the girls who are traveling may do additional money earning to pay for the trip. Remember, all troop funds are always kept in one troop bank account.

Family Contributions

If the girls decide to have families contribute to the cost of the trip (especially for Tier 4 and 5 travel), girls can set up a monthly payment plan. All funds will be held in the troop account, although girls should also track family contributions on a separate spreadsheet. Families should contribute no more than 1/3 the cost of the trip.

Activities

Activities are girl-led and involve all girls who are participating in the trip. Girls and volunteers should familiarize themselves with the trip itinerary. Be sure to include time for snacks and drinks, and for longer trips, add some down time for girls to gather and reflect on how the trip is going. Additionally:

- Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Have a signed parent permission slip form (either Annual or Single Event) and a current Health History Form for each girl. These forms should be kept with the troop at all times, and additional copies of these forms should also be kept in each driver's vehicle.
- Always have a Troop First Aid Kit
- Have Certificates of Insurance on file for destinations for the following activities:
 - Rental of facility or services (e.g. rental of church hall, campground, skating rink)
 - Contracted services (e.g. rental of school bus, contracted specialist)
 - High-risk activities (e.g. visit to riding facility, rock climbing, rafting, any activities requiring waivers)

Transportation

Follow all council Policies and Procedures when traveling with girls, available at girlscoutsgwm.org. For additional information on travel, please review Girl Scout Guide to US Travel, or call council and ask to speak to a staff member about travel.

Transportation basics to always follow:

- If traveling by car, adhere to state laws and safe-driving practices at all times.
- When renting a van, vans must be 12 passengers or less; 15-passenger vans are prohibited.
- Drivers *must be registered volunteers* who are approved to drive by council. They will have provided proof of a valid driver's license, proof of liability insurance with bodily injury, and property damage insurance limits of coverage of at least \$100,000/\$300,000 bodily injury and \$50,000 property as part of their application process.
- Drivers must have in her/his possession a signed parent/guardian permission form for each girl in their vehicle.
- Troops traveling in one or more vehicles must include a minimum of one relief driver for trips over 200 miles one way.

Please note, for Tier 4 and 5 travel:

- Troops must have provisional trip approval before purchasing transportation tickets (flights, train, bus, etc.).

Rooms and Lodging

During any overnight trip, sleeping arrangements must be as follows:

- Under no circumstances may one adult and one girl share a bed, regardless of family relationship.
- It is required that each girl has their own "sleep sack" (a full or queen sheet that is sewn up at the bottom and side to make a sack) or sleeping bag to provide individual sleeping space if two girls are going to share a bed.
- Men must have separate sleeping and bathroom facilities from the girls.
- If needed, female adults may share sleeping accommodations with Daisy and Brownie Girl Scouts.
- If adults will be sleeping in the same space as girls, there must always be two approved, unrelated, female volunteers present.
- Whenever possible, Junior or older Girl Scouts should have sleeping accommodations separate from the adults.
- It is not appropriate or permitted to have dependent children of troop leaders/chaperones or siblings of troop members on the trip unless they are registered Girl Scout troop members.
- If girls will be using the pool at a location, you must have a lifeguard present and follow Safety Activity Checkpoints for swimming.

Personal Conduct on Trips

Girls and adults should review council policies and the Volunteer Essentials for travel, including appropriate behavior and their responsibilities as travelers. They may want to create a behavior contract that everyone agrees to and signs. For additional support in creating a behavior contract, contact Customer Care at 888-474-9686 or customercare@girlscoutsgwm.org. Additionally, be sure to:

- Have a safety plan while traveling, including using public transportation, restrooms, public places, and know what to do in case of an emergency.
- Teach girls to count off. Have a copy of your troop roster and assign each girl a number. Have the girls call out their numbers in order when you shout “count off.” Give girls time to practice the counting off process.
- Assign all girls a buddy. Buddies are responsible for staying together and making sure they stay with the group.
- Make sure all participants have a packing list of what they need and what is not acceptable to bring on the trip. All girls and adults must be able to carry their own luggage and equipment.

Council Support

Our council staff is here to support your girls in planning their trip experiences. Please contact our Customer Care team at customercare@girlscoutsgwm.org or 888-474-9686 so staff can support your troop travel plans.

For Tier 4 and 5 trips, plans will change as girls make decisions and adjust their budget. Continue to work with council staff throughout the process as girls change their plans. When final approval is given for Tier 4 and 5 trips, the troop will receive any necessary insurance forms, an extended trip report to be filled out by the girls and leaders, and any additional information needed for the trip.